



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Legislative Democrats Introduce Bill to Raise Minimum Wage**

*‘Wisconsin’s working families deserve a raise’*

MADISON - Today, Representative Cory Mason (D-Racine), Senator Robert Wirth (D-Somers), Sen. Nikiya Harris (D-Milwaukee), and Rep. Eric Genrich (D-Green Bay) announced that they are circulating for co-sponsorship a bill that will gradually raise Wisconsin's minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour and index it to inflation.

“Wisconsin’s working families deserve a raise,” said Rep. Mason. “More and more of our nation’s wealth is going to the richest few, while the cost of gas and groceries increases, and family income stagnates. It is long past time for those at the bottom of our economic ladder to get a raise.”

Wisconsin’s minimum wage is currently \$7.25 per hour. An individual working full-time at this minimum wage makes about \$15,000 per year, significantly less than the poverty level for a family of four. It is estimated that more than 600,000 Wisconsin workers would benefit from a wage increase to \$10.10 per hour.

Sen. Wirth said, “The reality is that you simply can’t live on the current minimum wage, and the public is starting to recognize that we need to do something. If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation over the last 40 years, it would already be over \$10 per hour. Sadly, minimum wage workers continue to fall further behind. Studies show that those making minimum wage spend nearly all of what they earn, so the increase will provide a boost not just to those working families, but to our businesses and economy, as well.”

This bill comes on the heels of a recent Gallup poll, which revealed that 76% of Americans support an increase in the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour.

“Americans have been crying out for change,” said Sen. Harris. “It is unacceptable that individuals who work full-time cannot support their families or meet their basic needs.”

Rep. Genrich added, “I’m proud to co-author a reasonable increase in Wisconsin’s minimum wage. As a tried-and-true anti-poverty tool, a fair minimum wage will improve the lives of thousands of working Wisconsinites and empower them to support their families without assistance.”

Rep. Mason concluded, “As we commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the national “War on Poverty,” raising Wisconsin’s minimum wage represents a tangible and overdue step we can take to lift families out of poverty and grow our economy by reaffirming the dignity of work.”

Representative Mason and Senator Wirth, joined by their colleagues Senator Harris and Representative Genrich, circulated this bill for co-sponsorship today and plan to formally introduce it next week. If enacted, Wisconsin’s minimum wage would immediately increase to \$8.20 per hour and reach \$10.10 per hour two years later. This legislation is similar to the “Fair Minimum Wage Act,” introduced in Congress by U.S. Senator Tom Harkin and U.S. Representative George Miller.

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